

THE-MAN-ON-THE-CORNER.

Topics of *The Times* Tensely Treated by One
Who Mingles 'mid the Passing Throng.

"The old fellow among ye taki' notes."

Going down the river this summer is a pleasant alternative for those who haven't the time or money to go off and enjoy the discomforts of the average country retreat. A nice sail or evening car-ride to a nearby sylvan dell, returning in time to snooze snugly in your own downy bed, is to many preferable to tramping dusty roads, catching more "chiggers" than fish beside a sluggish stream, roasting at night under a tin roof, 220 Fahrenheit, and absorbing gallons of water that hadn't been cold since last winter. Anyhow, it is fashionable to "go somewhere" during the "heated term," whether you want to or not, but I'll warrant that nine out of every ten are glad to get home when they can do so without being accused of being short. The stay-in-town crowd give them the "ha-ha," and buy coal with the coin they have saved by being out of style.

The Potomac has a fascination for those who refuse to be "finicky," and have learned that if you wish to avoid "mixed gatherings" you will have to quit this earth. On the excursion given by select organizations there is excellent order, and while everybody is bent on having a good time, no one troubles you if you don't trouble him. While all do not converse in placid tones, no harm is meant, and a little geniality makes things pleasant all around. The "mixed" gatherings on the river is dying out, for it has no basis for existence when the same people go that you meet at your own church or social "to-do." The companies understand that orderly conduct of passengers is the salvation of their business, and now the slightest semblance of unruliness means an evening in the lock-up.

A river crowd is a faithful type of true democracy. Artificial standards are smashed by common consent, and nature is allowed to take its course untrammelled by conventionalities. Equality of opportunity for enjoyment is the banner under which all classes endeavor to march. As is true of most assemblies there are more women than men aboard—I suppose it is because they have more time to spare and fewer chances for diversion than the sterner sex. You will find in the aggregation plenty of those who take lunch with them and begin to eat the minute the boat is clear of the wharf. Others are waiting at the portal of the bar to quench a consuming thirst. The "lady with the nerves" is there and she begins to fidget and find fault, first, her chair isn't comfortable, the jabber of voices makes her headache, she can't get a clear view of the scenery, somebody tramples upon her foot or jostles her elbow, and finally gets sore because the boat doesn't start back at the moment she evolves the idea it should. There is the gang who keep up a continuous parade from the lower deck to the pilot house, for no particular reason—just want to be anywhere but where they are. The girl who is always losing sight of her beau or female companion is always in evidence, inquiring for "Will" or "Mavme." The preacher likes to go too—presumably to study the follies of humanity and to gather material for next Sunday's sermon. He never goes near the dancing pavilion, for it isn't his cue to take chances on catching some of his best-paying members violating the church discipline by indulging in the "light fantastic."

The dancers are *sui generis*—they have a personality peculiarly their own, and when Charlie Hamilton gets well under way they become oblivious to all surroundings. If you wish to see staid Christians and merry epicureans bridge across the river, go to the "light fantastic."

but "spoon." They hang together as if glued and he whispers sweet things into her ear as she absorbs the ice cream that the "hot air" has failed to melt. "They'll get bravely over it after a while," some unsympathetic brute will say. People whose paths haven't crossed for years hold reunions and renew old friendships—that's nice. The married man whose wife was too indisposed to come, but insisted that he should go out for a little recreation—he's there in large quantities, as is also the married woman whose husband is on night watch at his place of business, but who thought the ride would do her good. These persons never engage in flirtations—of course not! The "old vet" who knows every foot of the river and who reminiscences recalls the history associated with every spot or building passed is a delightful individual to meet. He invariably smokes a pipe, but it will pay you to keep a few cigars on hand to loosen up his memory and linguistic organs. Coming back you find the sleepy element in full swing. People who ordinarily don't go to bed until 12 p. m., suddenly get sleepy as soon as the boat starts for Washington, and their poses on sofas, stools or deck rail are often more picturesque than graceful. The steamer makes fast at landing—everybody finds his or her "company"—a mighty rush for the cars—a Babel of tongues—home—and it's all over—until next time.

Yes, a trip down the river is a joyous event, if you are in the proper spirit for it.

If any of our ladies want to be "it" sure enough, just don one of those elegant grass linen outfits.

Roscoe Conkling Murray Simmons, the breezy and versatile Washington correspondent of the *Charleston Advertiser*, announces that henceforth he is a citizen of West Virginia.

Dr. W. T. Blackshear intimates that the blandishments of fame and fortune in that unpronounceable place in the Philippines will scarcely tempt him from the sacred precincts of the Sixth Auditor's office.

When I see T. A. Johnson speeding toward the tennis court early in the morning and Francis De S. Smith meandering toward the golf links, it is easy to realize that "we are getting more like white folks every day."

Pierce Place is a modern cosmopolis. In its two blocks you can find preachers, teachers, editors, lawyers, department clerks, musicians, dressmakers, laundresses, dentists, doctors, caterers, chefs, and last, but not least, lots of people who bask in the sunshine of elegant leisure.

Mr. James F. Alston, of the Treasury Department, was in a happy mood when I saw him the other day. Col. McKay's will announced a bequest of \$25,000 to his brother-in-law, Sam'l E. Fatum, and official notice had come to him that his salary had been increased from \$1,200 to \$1,400 per annum. Why shouldn't he smile?

If a change is to be made in the head of the choir at St. Luke's P. E. Church I nominate Mr. R. W. Tompkins for the place. He is a skilled musician and an indefatigable worker. He would be in his element with the excellent material found at St. Luke's, and Rector Waller would please everybody by securing Mr. Tompkins' service as choirmaster.

It is sincerely regretted hereabouts that for the time being our bustling friend "Phil" Waters, of Charleston, W. Va., who has broken all records as charter clerk in the Secretary of State's office, is temporarily "outside the breastworks." No doubt a place equally as good will soon be found for him, as he is too useful a young man to be allowed to remain away from the place.

In Pierce Place, not far from Fourteenth street, is a persistent piano performer who "plunkity-plunks" on that instrument all day and far into the night. All pieces sound alike to the neighbors, and the composer is or ought to be at St. Elizabeth's. A lady told me that no one would mind how long the party entertained herself on the piano, if she would just learn to play something recognizable.

And now Samuel E. Lacy has blossomed out into a "washee washee" man, having opened a laundry business at 1700 Twelfth street northwest, in connection with Mr. C. P. Goines. These young men are eminently correct in their endeavor to hold this important branch of industry within the race, and they should be liberally supported. "Sam" was a milkman once upon a time and has learned the advantage of getting up ahead of other people when public needs are to be served.

OBSERVATIONS.

A rose of red is not necessarily fatal. Rev. W. Bishop Johnson is riding a wheel.

These are days of appointments and disappointments.

The Panama hat craze shows distinct evidences of retrogression.

Recorder Dancy is an official who has the courage to say "no" when he doesn't mean "yes."

Matrimony has made a big dent in the teaching corps of the Washington schools this year.

The Potomac would not seem the same without Col. Bob Key, Major Cox and the ever-ready "Hop" Coates.

Perhaps Prof. L. M. Hershaw will be called upon to draft the next bill to create a Freedmen's Inquiry Commission.

The rumor that Eddie Matthews, the expert mixologist of the Philadelphia House, is to be married soon, lacks confirmation.

It will be a big mistake if the new municipal building is planned to extend north of the plat formerly occupied by the street railway power house.

It is noticeable that when preachers take a notion that their weight should be reduced they forget that "cutting out" chicken from their diet is the surest route to the desired emaciation.

One Joshua Anderson met with a summary death in Mississippi the other day. It was not the genial manager of the Tuskegee lunch room and the Jane Moseley during service, I am proud to say.

It is probable that Rev. W. Bishop Johnson will decline to stand for the office of educational secretary of the Baptist connection, and remain as pastor of the Second Baptist Church, where he has won so many laurels as a minister and financier.

Although there is a conspicuous sign on a door of the City Hall restaurant reading "for members of the bar only," I fail to notice any Negro members of the bar taking their midday luncheon there. They seem to prefer to roost upon a stool at the public counter. Why?

The editor of the *Travis* (Tex.) *Watchman* says he lacks only \$999,000 of being a millionaire, and yet complains of his poverty. He is \$999 ahead of the Man-on-the-Corner, and should feel "chesty" enough over his wad to consume porterhouse steak every morning and crown his headpiece with a real Panama hat.

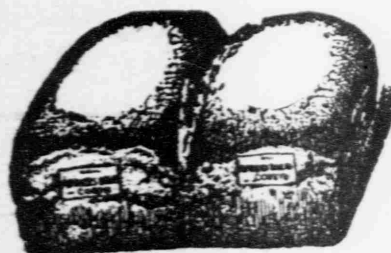
So bleached has the Negro become that colored girls are working in big stores, men and women attend the prejudiced theaters and clerks serve in the departments year in and year out with their Negro origin unsuspected. Is it a wonder that "black-skin removers" and "straighteners" are doing a land office business?

The contest for the to-be-vacant superintendency is growing warmer. At present it seems to be a three-cornered battle with Messrs. F. L. Cardozo, Jr., W. Bruce Evans and John C. Nalle at the cardinal points. All are so popular and have rendered so much valuable service in the schools that the friends of each are in a quandary which to pick for a winner. By the last of the month the situation promises to crystallize into definite form.

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